



**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB, Board)  
Public Involvement and Communications Committee (PIC)**

*September 21, 2021*

*Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams*

<b>Topics in this Meeting Summary</b>	
Opening.....	2
TPA Public Involvement Calendar .....	5
Committee Discussion on Recent Hanford Public Involvement Events .....	6
Environmental Justice 101.....	8
US Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report on Tank Closure – Public Involvement Recommendation #3.....	11
Open Forum .....	13
HAB Member Self-Assessments .....	14
Committee Business .....	15
Attachments .....	15
Attendees .....	15

*This is only a summary of issues and actions discussed at this meeting. It may not represent the fullness of represented ideas or opinions, and it should not be used as a substitute for actual public involvement or public comment on any particular topic unless specifically identified as such.*

## **Opening**

Ruth Nicholson, HAB Facilitator, welcomed meeting participants and notified the participants that the meeting was being recorded.

Stan Branch, US Department of Energy (DOE), announced that this meeting was being held in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Jeff Burright, Oregon Department of Energy and PIC chair, provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Due to a recent announcement by DOE regarding the status of the HAB membership packet, Jeff raised the question of member eligibility for the purposes of the day's PIC meeting.

Stan clarified that approval for membership packet was not yet received from DOE Headquarters (DOE-HQ). Gary Younger, DOE, stated that they were checking on the status of the packet twice per day, every day, and it could potentially be approved at any time. Carrie Meyer, DOE, explained that a discussion was held with the HAB chair in which it was agreed that actions requiring voting would be delayed until the following Board meeting.

Additionally, Carrie announced that DOE hoped to ask the HAB for a round robin discussion on the updated Hanford Site Five-Year Plan with a focus on priorities three years into the future.

Gerry Pollet, Heart of America Northwest, pointed that, under normal circumstances, speaking privileges in committee meetings are determined at the chair's discretion and the membership packet status should not impact the day's PIC meeting outside of voting to adopt meeting minutes. He stated that for the following day's full Board meeting, however, there would be an impact. He felt that it would be viewed as—and encouraged it to be viewed as—DOE impeding advice adoption if there was no voting the following day. He stated that wanted that to be clear to DOE-HQ and that he would be the first to tell the media of that failure. Further, he felt that it would support a position that the Board should be managed by the State of Washington, rather than DOE. He suggested that, for the following day, the agenda should be appended with public comment periods at the end of each discussion.

Steve Weigman, Public at Large and HAB chair, clarified that he recommended a non-voting meeting, rather than it being a DOE decision. He explained that he was not comfortable with voting due to the ineligibility of principal members. Ruth explained that her instructions for the meeting were to hold a three-part discussion period following each item on the agenda, which would include member discussion, public comment anticipating appointments to the HAB, and a standard public comment period for other members of the public. Gerry requested that that structure be explained at the beginning of the following day's Board meeting and noted that he was expecting people to sign up for public comment. Carrie stated that, as a reminder, DOE would continue to take written public comment for up to five days following a HAB meeting. Ruth noted that written public comment could be included in the draft meeting minutes.

Jeff confirmed that PIC would delay review and adoption of the prior meeting's meeting minutes until a future PIC meeting.

## ***Round Robin Introduction***

Jeff initiated a round robin discussion with the focus question of: "How should the TPA agencies share technical information, (and at what level of detail) to inform and engage the public?"

Jeff provided background on a recent US Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the Hanford tank farms that included several recommendations. He hoped to consider a specific recommendation, which read: "The Secretary of Energy should direct the Assistant Secretary of the

Office of Environmental Management to assess DOE's efforts to involve stakeholders in the Hanford tank closure process to ensure that DOE engages them in the decision-making process, communicates with them throughout the process in a way that addresses their concerns regarding technical challenges, and provides them with transparent information about the science and rationale behind decisions.”

Jeff stated that he, personally, wanted to see technical information provided to alleviate the concern of “garbage in, garbage out.” He asked the committee members what level of technical detail the public should have access to.

Tom Sicilia, Oregon Department of Energy, noted that there is an archive of past Hanford press releases at his office. From reviewing those, he felt that the fact sheets provided are helpful and that links to related Administrative Record resources were helpful. However, he found that not all documents referenced were consistently available in the Administrative Record. He thought it was important to have all referenced items publicly available, rather than requiring a request for information.

Dan Solitz, Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board, agreed with Tom Sicilia. He added that he would like to see dates associated with references and resources that would allow a reader to follow the process chronologically. He suggested that, should there be an orientation meeting for new HAB members, that the meeting would serve as an opportunity to teach new members how to find information that is not yet available. Jeff wondered if there would be value in putting together a “here’s what the agencies have been talking about” compilation in regard to letters going back and forth between the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies.

Steve Anderson, Grant and Franklin Counties, stated that in order to get public participation, information needs to be put in front of people in the places that they’re already looking.

Bob Suyama, Benton County (lapsed HAB appointment), referenced the round robin focus question and suggested that the HAB committees may be the best avenue to provide public input, as they have the background, experience, and technical experts among their membership necessary to dig into technical information. He considered the need for a process by which to inform the public when technical presentations are being provided to HAB committees, as he felt that the information was not provided to the general public effectively.

Shannon Cram, University of Washington, stated that, in considering the question, she would first ask how to engage non-technical personnel if the point is to engage the public in technical conversations. She felt that the public needed to be allowed to talk about technical topics on an equal level, and to allow that, topics needed to be framed in a social context. As an example: asking or explaining what future they would be working towards in the 200 Area by cleaning up the Site. She felt that goal was something that could be understood by most. She wanted to start with at least a few questions about the overall goal and let technical information be applied to a broader social context. She felt that something often missed by technical personnel was that technical information sharing could be exclusionary, though unintentionally.

Steve Wiegman recalled that the question was a challenge he dealt with throughout his career, going back 40 years. Something that he observed work consistently well were artistic renderings and technical models that showed the intended results of the work being done. He noted that he hasn’t seen physical models or diagrams provided to the public in some time, where they used to be set up and displayed in the malls, providing people the chance to talk about them. Additionally, those models were previously used during in-person HAB meetings. He believed them to be helpful because they provided content for the physical reality of what was being dealt with, as most members of the public are not given the opportunity

to see the work first-hand. Steve also liked a previous “gazebo” idea where conversations could be held with people that want to go into technical depth.

Jeff followed on to Steve’s idea, stating that he would like to see a two-dimensional model of the tank farms. Steve agreed, stating that a model could be developed to show the layers of material involved. He explained that similar physical models were built in the utility business; such a model would allow the public to visualize lateral flow in impermeable layers. He recalled that some of the models created were located at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) previously but was unsure if they were still there.

Jacob Reynolds, Non-Union, Non-Management Employees, provided several thoughts on the subject. He felt that there was a staggering amount of technical information available to the public. Through the Office of Scientific and Technical Information (OSTI) Information Bridge, there was a lot of technical information written by technical people for technical people. Though he felt that the information might be inaccessible to the general public without technical backgrounds, he also felt that it was unfair to expect technical personnel to be asked to write for the general public. He noted that he personally loved the Hanford Tank Waste topic and spent much of his spare time writing technical articles for the scientific community.

Jacob recalled an event approximately 10 years prior where there was a tank leak that received a lot of publicity. Among the accusations DOE received from the public was that DOE was covering it up; Jacob was personally in front of an irate group of people asking about a potential cover up. During this event, he pointed out documentation that he assisted in writing, which had been available for years but had not been read. He wanted to put the idea out to the general public that, should there be a topic one wants to know more about, the best course would be to look into publicly available documentation.

Shelley Cimon, Columbia RiverKeeper, recalled the events Jacob was referring to, noting that it was a difficult time. She felt that a lack of transparency has the effect of creating suspicion. Thinking back to what she referred to as the “groundwater vadose zone days” at the Hanford Site, she recalled that DOE previously had a three-dimensional model that looked at groundwater flow. It was a fish tank with layers representing a cross section of the site. She felt that visualization was effective, and it would be valuable to create models that represent what was going on at the Hanford Site, particularly in relation to the Direct-Feed Low Activity Waste (DFLAW) project. She agreed with Jacob’s sentiment regarding the expectation of technical people writing for laypeople being unfair. She noted that there are people that do that; the service could be contracted out and that it was important to have smaller “bites” of information for consumption by the public.

Liz Mattson, Hanford Challenge, noted the layers of accessibility that result from the nature of a complex cleanup effort. She noted that, without being on a distribution list, most people wouldn’t know what documents have been or are being shared. She felt that there was improvement to me made to facilitate information discovery, not only for the general public, but also for those making an effort to review information. As an example, she thought it would be helpful to have all relevant links provided and accessible as part of a public comment period.

Tom Galioto, Public at Large (lapsed HAB appointment), noted that there were several instances in which legal or policy restrictions existed regarding information sharing. He expected that there was likely resistance to information sharing in some instances due to the level of effort required to share with the public. He suggested that DOE create a guide to assist the public in finding publicly available and released information, as that was a consistent challenge faced by the public.

Steve Wiegman noted that many members of the public that he has interacted with would be unlikely to pursue information if a document needed to be read. He stated that he used to work with a graphic artist and was impressed by the level of technical detail that could be communicated through art. Jeff recalled a similar conversation where the need for Hanford “storytellers” was discussed. He thought it might be helpful to have someone bring the challenging information “down off the mountain.”

### **TPA Public Involvement Calendar**

Dana Cowley, Hanford Mission Integration Solutions (HMIS), presented the most recent TPA Public Involvement Calendar.

Ryan Miller, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), provided information on an Ecology 45-day comment period for the Integrated Disposal Facility (IDF) permit modification. He noted that Ecology had an additional comment period planned that was unrelated to the Hanford Site. He said that interested persons could find more information on Ecology’s website.

Dana stated that a Hanford Five-Year Plan comment period would occur in October, as Carrie Meyer previously explained. She noted that there would be a survey associated with the comment period. Jeff Burright wondered if the survey effort might be something that the PIC could assist with in the future. Dana stated that DOE appreciated the HAB’s input, but the timing did not appear to work out in this instance. However, she noted that there would be an upcoming fact sheet that the PIC could assist with.

Moving on, Dana noted that comment periods related to the WTP Chapter 6A Inspection Plan Class 2 permit modification and a Draft Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR) Evaluation for the Test Bed Initiative (TBI), which included an evaluation of waste from SY-101 to determine if it met DOE M 435.1-1 criteria.

Liz Mattson asked if the TBI Environmental Assessment would be opened for public comment. Dana stated that it was unlikely, as there was a legal requirement to do it the way it had been done. Jeff thought that statement to be inaccurate, stating that rather than being done in the way that was required, it was instead meeting the minimum requirements for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and that there was likely more that could have been done. However, Jeff noted that he was pleased to see that there was an extended public comment for the WIR.

Bob Suyama noted the waste resulting from the TBI was intended to be sent offsite to Waste Control Specialists in Texas. He read about a recent law passed that could hinder waste being sent to Texas and asked if the permit was open to sending wastes to alternate disposal sites. Dana explained that Texas had not banned nuclear waste in general, but instead high-level waste. If TBI worked as intended, the waste being shipped would be low-level waste and would still qualify for disposal in Texas. Gerry Pollet contributed, stating that the law was related to spent nuclear fuel and above ground storage, rather than disposal.

Gerry stated that the WIR evaluation was tied to the permitting of the IDF and that he hoped to see the two public comment periods tied together. Though they were two unique permitting or decisions points, they were closely related when considering their environmental impacts.

Regarding Ecology’s State Waste Discharge Permit ST4500, Ryan stated that there was little additional information to provide, but he understood that it was on schedule to begin as planned.

Dana reviewed the holding bin-listed items, stating that there had been no change for any of them. She then asked for further committee questions.

Gerry asked if there were plans for public involvement in relation to the B-109 tank leak. He stated that Heart of America Northwest held workshops with over 60 participants in which he observed a public demand for participation and action. It was reported to him that there were over 100 letters sent the Governor of Oregon and over 1,000 sent to the Governor of Washington on the subject. He thought that if the public were to hear the following day that TPA agency decisions were being made behind closed doors, it would be a disaster. He insisted that the PIC act on the subject and tie it to advice; they needed to consider permit revisions for leak response to include a public involvement component.

Steve Wiegman pointed out that there was no plan to adopt advice that week. Jeff stated that there would be opportunity for discussion regarding additions to advice. Gerry felt that it was up to the PIC to discuss the matter, as no one else would.

David Bowen, Ecology, stated that the agency was looking into the public involvement process, but there were TPA requirements that needed to be adhered to regarding to agencies coordinating with one another. He took exception to Gerry's statement of decisions being made behind closed doors. Though it was presently being worked on at a management level, any type of leak response plan has a public involvement process. They needed to be careful to ensure that the process was implemented correctly and consistently. He heard and understood Gerry's concern and assured him that they were working to ensure public involvement in the process.

#### **Committee Discussion on Recent Hanford Public Involvement Events**

Jeff Burright introduced the discussion topic. He hoped for committee members to reflect on recent public involvement events and share their impressions on the public involvement efforts. He recalled a selection of the recent events at and related to Hanford, such as a budget priorities public meeting and technical meetings between DOE and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission regarding the WIR for vitrified low-activity waste, which were described as "the weediest of the weeds." Additionally, he recalled that Ecology held new "Let's Talk About Hanford" events that he was interested in hearing perspectives on. He noted that the PIC meeting being held at that moment would qualify, as there was a recent change in that they were being recorded and uploaded to YouTube.

Dan Solitz praised Ecology's recent event in which it talked about the Columbia River. He thought the speaker was well informed and enthusiastic. He thought it was a good discussion and noted that it was one of the few he had heard not related to waste. He felt it was a big contrast to DOE's budget meeting. Ginger Wireman, Ecology, thanked him for the comments and noted that there was a wildlife-related event scheduled for late October with support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as Hanford History Part II event the following week.

Gerry Pollet commented that the budget meeting was not even pro forma. He stated that it led to members of the public telling him that they would never attend again and that it was a big impact to public involvement. He expected that people would seek other ways to participate where public meetings are not valuable. He stated that the budget meeting was not valuable; there was no dialogue and there was no information provided. He stated that all the advice given about online meetings was ignored for that meeting.

Liz Mattson wondered if TPA agencies could share lessons learned from the budget meeting and if there was a conversation about how to make it work better in the future. Carrie Meyer stated that there were lessons learned. Over the last few years DOE had been trying to work to the guidance provided by the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and in doing so, moved away from an effective level of

detail on subprojects. The subproject details could have included what the priorities were, why they were priorities, and how those priorities were determined.

Jennifer Colborn, HMIS, noted that another thing that came up during the meeting was transcription in Spanish. She expected that future materials would be translated to Spanish.

David Bowen appreciated DOE's efforts toward adding additional details. He stated that Ecology would continue to push for budget numbers in order to have informed conversations with DOE and that conversations on that topic were ongoing. Emerald Laija, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), felt that the level of detail provided by DOE had not been adequate for years and heard similar concerns from the public. She thought it was a source of frustration and something that needed to be worked out. She hoped to work towards a better experience in the future.

Dan Solitz noted that, for previous HAB meetings, he was able to review the recordings and got much more out of the experience. He felt it was an added value.

Bob Suyama noted that the Tank Waste Committee (TWC) let Gerry Pollet and his students provide a presentation. He noted it was different than the typical TPA agency presentations and felt that it was a step toward new avenues of public input.

Carrie provided additional detail on DOE's plans for public input on budget priorities. In the fall, at the end of the Fiscal Year (FY), DOE would update the Five-Year Plan. It would reflect work achieved in FY21, work planned in FY22, and work expected to proceed in FY23. Comments could be provided on the FY23 work, but those budgets are already submitted, so unless there were a change in the risk profile, there would be little impact on the plans. DOE was specifically interested in receiving input for FY24 and FY25.

She explained that DOE hoped to hold a Committee of the Whole (COTW) round robin discussion with the HAB to receive input on budget priorities three or more years out. The COTW discussion would be recorded and submitted alongside a survey as input to the DOE 10-Year strategic vision, which is updated in that same timeframe. After the President's budget is released, DOE hoped to brief the HAB, and get input on the Hanford Five-Year Plan focusing on FY24. If the timing and process worked as intended, it would become a yearly cycle of input, with each year's input feeding into the next iteration of each plan.

Jeff noted that there seemed to be a lot of interest in regard to the priority "line" for funding; what was above it, or what was below it. He understood that not every project could be funded but wanted to understand how that line was determined or if there was anything in public communications that might show that line to give the public a chance to try to save projects of interest that fell below it.

Carrie stated that the line did not exist at that time and would not exist until there was a response from OMB on the budget priorities submission. She explained that there was ambiguity in the process. When work was planned, it was prioritized based on risk assessment and milestone requirements, unless there was an agreement amongst the TPA agencies that something else needed to occur first. She did not know exactly what that might look like, as the data was protected by legal requirements. When the response was received, what DOE would share was the planned work and impacted milestones. DOE did not have the ability to share a detailed compliant budget versus what was funded, nor the ability to share the integrated priority list.

Steve Wiegman noted that they used to know where the line was, and it moved quite often. Priorities would change as time went on; it was not a static process. He asked if there was an accessible resource available to help the public understand how the risk assessment used in planning. Carrie stated that

resource was something being developed. Steve Wiegman also wished to know if DOE would be able to provide perspective on how the Hanford Five-Year Plan fed into the DOE 10-Year Strategic Vision. Carrie stated that was something they were planning on discussing. Regarding timing of the COTW meeting, DOE hoped to pair it with new member orientation, which was dependent on the timing of new membership approval.

Liz commented that there needed to be a space for the public to engage in general discussion on Hanford, rather than being limited to specific topics. She felt that the off-topic discussion that resulted from the DOE budget priorities presentation indicated that need. Carrie noted that that was being worked through, though the need for virtual meetings, rather than in-person, proved challenging in that regard.

Jeff noted that the discussion period was running close to the scheduled end time and provided quick reflections. He thought the WIR meetings went well and provided great analogies, making the information relatable to the general public. Though, he still hoped to see who the participants in those meetings were. He liked that Hanford Live events were recorded and could be watched at will, noting that with YouTube, they had the potential for global reach.

### **Environmental Justice 101**

Jeff Burright introduced the topic that would include presentations from both EPA and Ecology. He noted that, in the future, the committee hoped to hear from DOE regarding how it planned to implement environmental justice (EJ) priorities.

Carrie Meyer explained why DOE was not providing a presentation at that time. Though DOE had a renewed focus on EJ, it was not yet clear how it would be implemented within the agency. DOE did not want to present outdated or inaccurate information that would need to be corrected later, so instead it elected to present when more information became available.

Roberto Armijo, EPA, provided a presentation on the general scope of EJ, EPA's involvement in it, and its application to Hanford. He started with a definition for EJ: "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies."

He explained that it was a component of communities with environmental concerns, with a basis going back to the 1960s. It was started by individuals, primarily people of color, who sought to address the inequity of environmental protection in their communities. He broadly highlighted EPA's involvement in EJ, which included establishment of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), which provided advice on broad and crosscutting issues, and the Office of Environmental Justice, through which financial and technical assistance was provided to communities for addressing EJ concerns.

Roberto introduced the EJSCREEN Tool, an online interactive screening and mapping tool, and provided an example of the results it could generate. He noted, however, that EJ was not just about data; it also involved the interpersonal relationships in the community and the conversations that evolve from that. He reviewed slides identifying EPA's national EJ priority areas, challenges, and American Rescue Plan funding. He explained that EPA's Policy on Environmental Justice for Working with Federally Recognized Tribes and Indigenous Peoples outlined the agency principles in work protecting the environment and public health and address EJ concerns with federally recognized tribes and indigenous peoples throughout the United States. He identified the regional Environmental Justice Tribal and Indigenous Peoples Advisor.



Regarding the Hanford Site, he explained that EPA had not identified any communities with EJ concerns at that time. The Hanford Site itself had nobody living in it, and regarding Tribal concerns, Tribes stated that they preferred those issues be addressed as an obligation under the 1855 treaties rather than as EJ concerns. With his presentation concluded, he invited questions.

Steve Wiegman wondered if, in Roberto's opinion, dealing with Tribal issues under the stated treaties would be adequate. Roberto stated that he could not speak on the Tribes' behalf. Steve followed with an additional question: what is the future of this concept for Hanford? Where should the Board focus its attention on the matter of EJ? Roberto thought the Board should continue to discuss the matter to and see if discussions resulted in something tangible to pursue.

Ruth Nicholson noted that Ecology would also provide a presentation from the State of Washington's perspective, which may clarify that question further. Roberto, in closing, thanked the committee for its time and noted that EJ was not a black and white issue with a definitive boundary for action.

Ryan Miller and Ginger Wireman led a presentation on the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act, passed by the State of Washington in March of 2021. It covered several State agencies, while other agencies had the option to opt into it. The act itself was intended to remedy the effects of policies and practices that led to environmental health disparities in communities and improve the health of all people in Washington, while preventing disparities in the future. It aimed to specifically reduce exposure to environmental hazards within Indian country and to track and measure the accomplishments of state agency environmental justice implementation.

Ecology provided a definition of EJ that expanded upon that used by EPA: "Environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm."

As a result of the HEAL Act, a workgroup was created as a forum for communications and to assist in development of guidance, identification of issues, and measure tracking. Participating agencies were required to create or strengthen their EJ implementation plans, commination plans, and Tribal consultation frameworks. Plan requirements include both goals and actions to take, measures to track and measure accomplishments, methods by which equitable assess would be assured, and strategies to ensure compliance with already existing laws. Ecology had available a Washington Health Disparities map tool which each HEAL Act-participating agency would contribute data to.

Regarding Hanford, Ginger explained the difficulty in defining the affected region. No one lived on the site or up against its fence line, and there was no guidance or determined circumference around the site to define as an affected region. She noted that, over time, population growth and expansion of the cities could push populations closer to the boundaries of the site. She noted that, in determining EJ concerns, cumulative burdens needed to be considered. She explained that EJ was about more than race; it could include socioeconomic impacts or disabilities. As an example, emissions could be a concern along primary Hanford Site traffic routes.

A particular concern that had been identified was language; by total population and percentage of population metrics, it was shown that a significant amount of the residents in surrounding areas were not proficient in the English language, and instead had Spanish as their primary language. In order to

effectively communicate Hanford Site concerns, as a result, communication needed to be available in each language.

EJ best practices for the Hanford Site identified included prominent dual-language placement of translation availability on printed communications; inclusion and accessibility measures for public meetings, such as transcription, closed-captioning, translators, and interpreters; dual language Hanford Site perimeter signage; and others. Ginger suggested that the HAB could reach out to *Tú Decides*, a local bilingual newspaper. However, if inviting the public to attend HAB events through that route, the Board would need to ensure such events were accessible. Ginger concluded the presentation and invited questions.

### *Committee Discussion*

Shannon Cram, University of Washington, noted that she was excited to start holding conversations on the EJ topic. She was glad that EPA showcased the EJSCREEN tool and found it to be useful. She wondered if there were teaching resources that Roberto knew of for the tool. She also asked how they might be part of the way they talked about Hanford or risk. Roberto did not immediately know of any teaching resources but agreed to look into it. Ginger noted that the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) presented the same data and was continually adding layers of new data, such as heat exposure.

Additionally, Shannon noted that she was surprised to hear that no EJ concerns were identified for Hanford at the time. She wondered if the lack of identified concerns and related metrics would be an impact risk metric definition and future planning for Hanford Site cleanup; she wondered if not defining the EJ concerns was a risk itself. Additionally, she wondered if agencies were thinking about EJ risks in a more social context or if inequality were built into definitions of risk. Ginger provided an example of population growth concerns. She noted that, across the river from the Hanford Site, was an overburdened community due to lower incomes, migratory work patterns, and Spanish language dominance. A concern Ecology had was, because they were overburdened, what the best way would be to present information without creating an unnecessary fear. In that line of thinking, she wondered if it would be worth the risk of creating a fear when that actual likelihood of something going wrong was low, and if the agency did take that risk, if it would impose an extra burden on the community.

Shannon explained that her question was not intended to be about communication, but instead about planning and the risk metrics used in planning. She worried that the Hanford Site might not reach a future informed by EJ concerns. Jeff stated that he liked Shannon's idea, but also wanted to engage with Ginger's concern. He wondered if a concern might be created where they did not already exist. As an example, the public might fear loss of property value due to association with radioactive waste. He echoed a question Steve Wiegman posed earlier: where does the Board come into advising the agencies on EJ?

Ginger explained that, while the agencies could try to approach each community individually, the Board consisted of seats representing their respective groups, which included counties, cities, workforce, and interest groups, among others. The hope was that HAB members worked with and informed the constituencies that they represent.

Steve Wiegman suggested, in considering accident potential and proximity, that EJ mapping processes could encompass river proximity in addition to site proximity. Ginger agreed, stating that the affected region should not be defined as an arbitrary circle, and instead define those downstream or affected by runoff. She wanted to consider how to inform agricultural worker, those that fish in the river, and

similarly affected persons. Steve Wiegman noted that he was unsure of how to portray the risk without creating fear and that it was a question worth considering.

Gerry Pollet stated that each discussion of EJ should start with Tribal Nations presenting on their treaty and land rights. He thought that Tribal Nations would find the statement that Hanford was not an EJ concern to be an insult, as the land the Hanford Site was established on belong to the Tribes and that they suffer the greatest exposures from the site. He suggested that the Tribes be invited to provide an EJ presentation and that each meeting begin with a land recognition slide. Further, he noted that the EJ map tools were based on resident, rather than recognizing the use of the areas by people dependent on the land's resources. He noted that the discussion focused heavily on the city of Pasco's Spanish speaking population, but the Mattawa was the closest city. Mattawa had over 5,000 residents, with a 95% Latinx population that had limited English proficiency. This community used the river and, due to a current related a housing crisis, agricultural workers frequently camped along the banks of the river. He wanted to ensure Mattawa was included in the HAB's discussion on EJ.

Shelley Cimon stated that she would not speak for the Tribes, as it was not her place to do so. However, she recalled a story told to her by members of the Umatilla Tribe, indicating their history with the region extended far beyond the history of the Hanford Site. She wanted to ensure discussion encompassed a more expansive vision and future for the site, considering things like the care it would require 70 to 80 years in the future.

Additionally, regarding Pasco, Shelley noted that it had a tremendously different demographic than when she started at Hanford and needed to be acknowledged. She felt that the need for Spanish language signs should be implemented, as it was a simple thing that should have already been done. She considered what the HAB could do to help on the topic of EJ. She felt it was imperative to discuss what closure meant and how to approach it in a way that protected and acknowledged everyone. She recognized the difficult balance of informing without inciting fear and thought that they needed further discussion on how to collaborate with communities to shape what the site would look like in the future.

Jeff, in closing, stated that the committee should consider what the next steps might be and considered putting together an Issue Manager (IM) team on the subject. He thanked EPA and Ecology for their presentations.

### **US Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report on Tank Closure – Public Involvement Recommendation #3**

Jeff reintroduced the topic of the GAO report recommendation from the round robin discussion earlier in the meeting, reiterating the background of the topic. As stated prior, the recommendation being reviewed read: "The Secretary of Energy should direct the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Environmental Management to assess DOE's efforts to involve stakeholders in the Hanford tank closure process to ensure that DOE engages them in the decision-making process, communicates with them throughout the process in a way that addresses their concerns regarding technical challenges, and provides them with transparent information about the science and rationale behind decisions."

Jeff hoped to explore the topic as a committee and determine if it was something to consider HAB advice for. He explained that the committee has previously put forth the idea that Hanford needs to be remembered forever due to what would be left behind. He also considered, from the opposite perspective, when people might be allowed to forget and what conditions would allow that.

Jeff provided the example of Rocky Flats, which was declared finished and allowed land use under certain circumstances. Twenty years later, however, there was a resurgence of concern over what was left

behind and what decision were made in determining that. He noted that trust was an aspect; what if the next generation did not trust us and wanted to check their work? He considered what tools might be left behind to facilitate that.

He recalled a comment made by John Wagner at the first HAB Meeting: “DOE will not presume what you need to know or when you need to know it. We will not limit the scope of your work.” More recently, however, Jeff noted that he kept hearing that DOE faced difficulties with timeframes and layers of management approval needed to provide presentations, which impacted the Board’s direct access to information.

Steve Wiegman stated that the public could not be allowed to forget. He recalled something he was told before: do all you can, pay attention to what you did, and people in the future will do what they can. He took it to mean that they needed to do the best job they could with the resources available and keep good records. He thought they needed to maintain a “nuclear priesthood” where records were never lost or forgotten. However, he also thought they needed to start helping the TPA agencies to think beyond the present; they needed to raise their sites and think about future states. Steve felt that a full response to the GAO report recommendation went beyond the report and the conversation needed to remain open.

Liz Mattson stated that something that did not seem to be addressed was the inconvenience of Hanford’s contamination. She felt that the big picture and cumulative impacts were more challenging to explain, and as a result the public was provided with smaller amounts of specific information. She hoped to take a step back in the approach, rather than piecemealing it, as was done with the site at the time.

Dan Solitz felt that there needed to be two IM teams: one to respond to the GAO report and one to address the long-term concern about what would be left behind. For that second topic, he recognized that it was a complex process to start as a discussion, as it could comprise EJ, intergenerational equity, and many other topics. He wondered if the IM team focusing on end states—the COTW planning team—might be well suited to the topic. Due to the previous IM team leader stepping down, Dan agreed to lead the team until a new lead was established.

Jeff clarified the recommendation being addressed. He specifically wanted to explore what information was being provided around tank closure and how accessible or understandable it was. Tom Galieto considered that the HAB was provided information by DOE directly and to an extent influenced the information received by forming framing questions by which DOE developed presentations. He supported the idea that communication could and should improve to allow the public access to the information necessary to explore and resolve issues. He thought potential advice seemed appropriate; DOE had always supported stakeholder involvement, but details of what was done and how it should be done could have been better defined.

Steve Wiegman wanted to expand the conversation to include the fact that there were no tank closures underway and that none were planned, as Ecology would not allow them to closure. He stated that the committee needed to understand the decision-making process as part of the conversation; it was an important topic that went beyond technical aspects. He wanted to understand how decisions were being made and by whom.

Bob Suyama noted the word “transparent” in the GAO recommendation, considering that when the Board requested information from DOE, it needed to go through an undefined process to get approval, seemingly disappearing at DOE-HQ. He did not feel it was a transparent process when they had no one to talk to in regard to the approval process. Jeff recalled questions asked in a prior TWC meeting where

DOE had the opportunity to follow up on questions posed but were silent. Bob followed on, noting that when DOE does agree to follow up on questions, there was no defined timeframe.

Liz agreed that the length of time it took to get decisions was a huge barrier. She felt, due to the long period of time required to get information, significant issues and concerns held by the public could be lost. She wondered how to keep those issues alive.

Steve Anderson, reiterating an earlier statement, stated that there were so many parts to consider, they needed to come back to risk and priority; they needed to understand the risks, and which risks took priority in resolution or reduction. He felt that the HAB could not let itself become overwhelmed in minutia.

Ginger Wireman noted something that did not come up in the EJ discussion. She was on a state board of directors, where there was often serious discussion of compensating people to get them to participate. She felt it was a valid question for the HAB to consider: should someone be willing to participate, but could not due to work, should they be compensated? Jeff noted that he thought there were technical assistance grants in the budget. Ginger stated that some organizations, such as Hanford Challenge received grants, but that was not an option for public at large seats.

Jeff began polling for an IM team on the topic of responding to the GAO report recommendation. He agreed to put together a list of concerns that would serve as the team's starting point.

Dana Cowley made a note regarding previous discussion of Spanish language translation. In her previous work in news media, she would often reach out to immigrant populations. Something that was learned in that experience was that many were not literate in their native language, which could pose a challenge when expecting written communication to reach those populations. Roberto Armijo contributed, stating that having interpretation personnel from the communities would be key.

### **Open Forum**

Jeff Burright opened discussion to any issues or ideas committee members wished to explore.

Tom Sicilia remarked that there was a vacant seat on the Board that was designated for a regional environmental group. He suggested that the committee should try to get such agencies to nominate their personnel to fill the seat. He felt it would be beneficial for Board quorum purposes, at the least. Gary Younger noted that when constructing the year's packet for submittal, GreenLatinos was envisioned for the seat, but DOE-HQ did not agree. For the near-term DOE would not replace the seat, but Gary hoped to revisit the concern in the future. Tom Sicilia noted that he wanted to be cognizant of the quorum challenges the Board faced. Gary stated that he thought the bigger issue in that regard was absenteeism and hoped that the HAB Self-Assessment IM team would be able to assist in working through that.

Bob Suyama asked for detail regarding timeframes around the HAB membership approval process. Gary stated that the process begins in the winter timeframe when the membership packet is assembled. He hoped that when the packet presently under review was approved, he would have better guidance on what needed to be done in the future. Bob asked why so many separate offices or entities within DOE needed to review the packet and what value their review added to the process. Gary was unsure why so many offices looked at the submittal but noted that each office viewed the submittal with a different perspective. He did not know if there was standard for review, or a defined timeframe required for review or approval. He stated that DOE had done everything it could at the local level to move approval forward.

Steve Wiegman noted that there was no written process on it, and if there was, it would not be done the same way in the future. Gary agreed, however, though the membership package approval delay caused

issues where they had no control, absenteeism was something that could be controlled. He noted that some Board members may no longer wish to serve, while others do but might face impediments to doing so. He recognized two primary groups, those paid to be there and those that were retired and able to set their own agenda, with little in between. He thought the HAB, as an organization and institution, needed to explore how to better involve the public. Suggestions included exploring night meetings and shorter meetings.

Gerry Pollet stated that other regional Superfund site advisory groups, as part of their EJ commitment, ensure that they meet in the evenings with culturally appropriate support, which allowed a broad group of people to serve in membership and facilitated public observation and input. He suggested inviting advisory groups such as Duwamish River Cleanup Advisory Group or Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group to present on the topic.

Liz asked if there was a plan for quorum in the following day's Board meeting. Ruth stated that, per her understanding, there would be no actions taken that would require calculating a quorum. Each part of the meeting would have a public comment period at its end, which would allow those with lapsed memberships to provide comment alongside the broader public.

Jeff asked for help in determining what to do next regarding the EJ discussion. Dan Solitz suggested they start with DOE and ask for a subject matter expert to discuss EJ from DOE's perspective. If DOE did not have the information or resources ready at the time of the meeting, it was DOE's responsibility to let the HAB know when it would be ready.

Ginger Wireman thanked Gerry for his earlier comments on the Tribes, noting that it was rare for public meetings across North America not to have land acknowledgements. She felt it was a simple gesture that should be genuine. Tom Sicilia suggested that for the next PIC round robin, each member include a land acknowledgement as part of their contribution.

Daniel Strom, Benton-Franklin Public Health, asked for clarification on land acknowledgements. Ginger explained that the Hanford Site was on traditional lands of the Nez Perce, Yakama, and Umatilla Tribes. A land acknowledgement would be a statement acknowledging that. Gerry noted that, of added importance, was that the land use involved a treaty signed by the US Government.

Liz suggested an IM team to determine the next steps for the EJ discussion. Jeff agreed.

Ryan Miller shared information on recent Hanford Live events. Ecology was excited by how well they had gone. There were three held at the time of meeting, with the first hosted on Facebook. Based on feedback regarding the Facebook platform, Ecology elected to use WebEx in addition, as an alternative for audience members that did not wish to use Facebook. The attendance numbers were encouraging, with the most recent event resulting in upwards of 50 audience members watching the live event. The event page for that reached 17,000 people and received 240 responses. The next scheduled event, Hanford History Part 2, had a reach of 6,800 people. Additionally, the agency was receiving positive feedback on the events and people had noted appreciation for the recording availability afterwards.

### **HAB Member Self-Assessments**

Jeff Burright invited committee members to talk about ways in which they themselves were engaging in public outreach, down the level of small conversations with individuals. Jeff noted that he attended a National Academy of Sciences meeting in July, but otherwise only engaged in individual conversations with other parents in a social setting. He noted challenges in getting out for that purpose due to COVID-19.

Liz Mattson stated that Hanford Challenge was experimenting with trying to generate more comments during public comment periods. She found that the best timeframe appeared to be lunch time, especially if kept to 45 minutes or less. She noted attempts in structuring work around EJ concepts, such as the idea of not relying on people to come to her organization to learn about Hanford, but rather going to communities with tailored information or a high-level introduction. She hoped to have more to share by the next meeting.

Gerry Pollet thanked Liz. By comparison, Heart of America Northwest had seen the opposite results in scheduling public events. For recent workshops the organization held, 5:30 PM was comparatively more popular than the lunch events, with about 45 versus 20 attendants, respectively. He also observed better results with live events than requesting people to watch a recording, as they typically only watch a few minutes. He expected that, going forward, they would continue to try to offer both options where it was feasible in order to give people that choice. As a public outreach effort, he noted that he and his students provided a presentation on the B-109 tank leak to the TWC. He stated that he was working with DOE and others to get a virtual tour for public health students and that he may ask members to participate in panels.

Jeff stated that he helped Ken Niles give a presentation to his golf club recently, where he received several questions. Ruth noted that she recently used the old Lego map as an orientation tool when teaching a new facilitator about the DOE Complex. The map used stacked Legos to represent the volume of different types of waste on various sites. She found it very visually effective.

Dan Solitz noted that the Lego topic reminded him of a recent Savannah River Site article he saw where they were stacking waste on the site and being commended for it.

### **Committee Business**

The committee members considered the next options for a committee meeting date but ultimately decided to determine the date at an Executive Issues Committee (EIC) call scheduled for September 29.

Topics considered for the following meeting were:

- Results of DOE's Hanford Five-Year Plan Survey
- Tribal presentations on EJ, treaty rights, and use of land acknowledgements
- Public involvement in the tank closure mission

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1: Deputy Designated Federal Officer Slide

Attachment 2: Meeting Agenda

Attachment 3: Draft Meeting Minutes for PIC May Meeting

Attachment 4: Getting Started with Teams Guide

Attachment 5: Tri-Party Agreement Agencies Public Involvement Calendar

Attachment 6: Environmental Justice at EPA and Hanford Presentation

Attachment 7: HEAL Act Presentation

Attachment 8: Government Accountability Office Report of Tank Closure

Attachment 9: Draft FY22 HAB Work Plan

### **Attendees**

**Board Members and Alternates:**

Bob Suyama, Primary	Dan Solitz, Primary	Gerry Pollet, Primary
Jacob Reynolds, Primary	Liz Mattson, Primary	Shannon Cram, Primary
Shelley Cimon, Primary	Steve Anderson, Primary	Steve Wiegman, Primary
Tom Galioto, Primary	Daniel Strom, Alternate	Jeff Burright, Alternate
Tom Sicilia, Alternate		

**Others:**

Carrie Meyer, DOE	David Bowen, Ecology	Abigail Zilar, General Support Services Contractor to DOE
Gary Younger, DOE	Ginger Wireman, Ecology	Dieter Bohrmann, CPCCo
Stan Branch, DOE	Ryan Miller, Ecology	Coleen Drinkard, HMIS
	Emerald Laija, EPA	Dana Cowley, HMIS
	Roberto Armijo, EPA	Gabriel Bohnee, HMIS
	Earl Fordham, DOH	Jennifer Colborn, HMIS
		Patrick Conrad, HMIS
		Miya Burke
		Tracy Barker
		Joshua Patnaude, HAB Facilitation Team
		Olivia Wilcox, HAB Facilitation Team
		Ruth Nicholson, HAB Facilitation Team

Note: Participants for this virtual meeting were asked to sign in with their name and affiliation in the chat box of Microsoft Teams. Not all attendees shared this information. The attendance list reflects what information was collected at the meeting.